2: Stefansson--20-21 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 132, 133

"The Coppermine, as elsewhere described, is well wooded. It is one of the swiftest large rivers of the world and is therefore never likely to be commercially valuable for anything except water power. It is practically a continuous rapid, but there are no real falls in it, not even the so-called Bloody Fall which is really a shelving cascade or rapid about six hundred yards long. On account of the general rocky character of the country, the valley of the Coppermine is much narrower than would be expected from the volume of water it carries, and the stream itself runs through a confined bed and is seldom over three hundred yards wide and that only in shallow places, while one hundred thirty yards may be considered its average width between Kendall River and the sea while there are many places much narrower than this. Being the swiftest of the great northern rivers, the Coppermine is also peculiar in the roughness of its ice in winter. What apparently happens is that first the river freezes over to a greater or lesser thickness of ice and then the rush of the water causes this original roof of ice to break down and cave into the water. The swift current seizes the blocks of ice and whirls them downstream until something occurs to make a [21] blockade and there they are heaped together on edge and in every other way while level ice again forms over the open water which has just been swept clear. A few days or weeks later another cave-in may occur where the ice lies smooth and the same process is repeated. But where a jam has once been lodged and cemented together there the ice will remain approximately unchanged all winter. As the season advances the water in the stream bed gets less and less. In

many places in the Coppermine there seems to be a sort of winding secondary channel in the bed of the river proper so that towards spring there is really only a little creek running through this curved and ice-roofed water course. Eventually the roof over even this sometimes caves down, but usually only after the ice becomes so thick (say over a foot) that it does not break small and float in cakes as the younger ice did earlier in the year. The current is not so strong late in winter, with the result that this last cave-in produces pits and valleys in the river ice proper. In the centers of some of these the ice is eight or ten feet below the general level of the river in the months of March and April. In the spring when the thaws begin, it is along this channel that the melted snow water first begins to run and we found in the first week of June, 1910, that where the rest of the ice of the river was comparatively solid, this creek had commenced flowing and had eaten through the ice so that although the water had not risen sufficiently to flood the river as a whole, nevertheless a crossing could be made by sled."

2: Stefansson--40-41 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 132

"There are some rather astonishing differences in climate within the comparatively restricted district occupied by the Copper Eskimo. Dr. Anderson found, for instance, in the first week of May, 1911, that the rivers were already opened and mosquitoes on the wing on the southward slope between Dismal Lake and Great Bear Lake. The same year the last days of April and the first days of May we had the first thaws at the mouth of the Kugaryuak, eighteen miles east of the Coppermine. The morning of the second day of May we arrived at the village of the Noahonirmiut near Lambert Island. When we arrived the houses were all of snow, but that was the first warm day and by the middle of the afternoon most of the snow roofs had caved in on account of the heat of the sun and had been replaced by roofs of skin. Going north from Lambert Island we found a week later on Forsyth Bay at the northeast corner of Simpson Bay, houses that were still all of snow. In other words, although we were traveling slowly and halting frequently, we were still moving north at a pace that was leaving the summer farther and farther behind us. We went across the Wollaston Peninsula into Prince Albert Sound and spent more than a week visiting the people there; then we went west along the sound and south to Bell Island near the southwest corner of Victoria Island. The snow on Bell Island showed plainly that there had been no thaw as yet, for even a slight thaw is bound to leave a trace by turning to ice some of the snow on the southward faces of the cliffs. The first thaw came on May twenty-sixth when we had been two days in camp at Bell Island. In the afternoon of that day we started southwest across Dolphin

and Union strait and landed four days later just west of the mouth of Crocker River. When we left Victoria Island the snow had lain soft and white as in midwinter; when we got half way across the straits, puddles of water began to appear here and there on the ice and the last ten or fifteen miles before reaching the mainland the sea ice was honeycombed by the sun and we waded in many places knee deep through puddles on the ice. There were open cracks near the shore across which we had to ferry our sled and when we got to the land we found it bare of snow except that a few deep drifts still remained in the shadow of cliffs and cutbanks. In going southwest sixty miles we had found as great a change of weather and ice conditions as could possibly have been brought about on southwest Victoria Island by a month of spring weather. In other words, [41] there is a difference of a month apparently in the climate of southwest Victoria Island and of that of the mainland sixty miles south."

2: Stefansson--41 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 132

"The fall of 1910, the caribou migration crossing Coronation Gulf from the north began November ninth, which seems to indicate that the ice had not been strong enough to carry the animals until a day or two before this time, for it is the universal Eskimo account that the animals are found on the south coast of the land each fall waiting for the ice to form. One would infer that this is the case and there is no reason to doubt it; besides the statement is corroborated by Collinson's observations at Cambridge Bay on southeast Victoria Island in 1851. On Coronation Gulf it was the second week in October before the rivers could be crossed at any places except those of nearly current-less water. In September, 1910, the snow fell more than once to clear away again. There was a medium heavy fall of snow, September nineteenth, however, which re-mained on the ground for about ten days but had practically disappeared by the end of the month and it was the tenth of October before even the quieter places on the Dease River were frozen, while on November eighth when we set out from the mouth of Dease River for our crossing of the Barren Grounds northwest of Langton Bay, Bear Lake was frozen only around the edges and open water could be seen a few miles out. When we reached the height of land north of Great Bear Lake, however, and commenced the descent of the Arctic slope, it seemed to us again as if we had in the space of two or three days gone a month farther into the winter."

2: Stefansson--41-42 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 132

"It is difficult without the maintenance of a permanent meteorological station to say definitely about the prevailing winds in summer, but in winter it is an easy matter, for the snowdrifts form a permanent record of the trend of the stronger and more frequent winds. We know, therefore, that in Coronation Gulf and on Dolphin and Union Strait and in Prince Albert Sound the prevailing winds are from the northwest approximately, while the winds next in frequency and force are approximately from the southeast, or from between southeast and east so that there is an angle of perhaps ten or fifteen degrees between the snowdrifts formed by the opposing winds. One result of the strength and frequency of the northwest winds is that driftwood is driven chiefly upon beaches that face that wind while beaches lying parallel to the wind or in such a way that the wind blows off the land are less well supplied with driftwood, or not at all. Accordingly, we have a [42] comparative plenty of drift sticks along the mainland shore as far east as Liston Island, while there is little on the opposite shore of Victoria Island. Similarly there is considerable driftwood along the south coast of Prince Albert Sound and very little along the north coast. The record for the whole year is therefore complete for the driftwood deposited in summer tells the same story as the snowdrifts in winter with reference to the prevalence of the northwest wind.

We found the summer of 1910 that inland one hundred miles or so south of Coronation

Gulf there is very little rain and the sun shines down from a cloudless sky often for many days and nights in succession. The result is that the temperature rises to a height which one would not suspect could prevail north of the Arctic Circle. We did not have a thermometer with us, but all of us felt that the heat was intense and difficult to bear and I suppose that at times it rose to well over 90° in the sun and probably approached 80° in the shade. In September, however, the climate changed suddenly and both the Eskimo and the Bear Lake Slavey Indians said that this was the ordinary case. Fogs and drizzling rains became prevalent and days of sunshine were comparatively rare.

On the seacoast the presence of floating ice at no great distance from land has a considerable effect on the climate farther west, but in the comparatively narrow and enclosed waters the quantities of ice are not so large and although the seacoast of Coronation Gulf is said by the Eskimo to be more rainy and foggy than the interior, still it is no doubt less foggy and rainy and probably considerably warmer than the coast of the open ocean farther west."

2: Stefansson--45 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
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"It is commonly supposed, no doubt from the knowledge of Greenland, that most of the Arctic Islands are covered with an ice cap. This is so far from being true that so far as I know, there is not a vestige of a glacier anywhere either in Victoria or Banks Island. . . ."

3: Rasmussen--7-8 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo-1-2
116, 122, 132

"Queen Maud Gulf is a large, expansive sea running out into relatively narrow straits to the north, west and east. There is a fairly [8]swift current through these straits, and as swell and wind have more or less free play over the broad indentation between Victoria Land and the mainland, it is rather late in the year before the water further out is sheeted with ice. Along by the shore, however, where the efflux of many rivers makes the water fresh, and innumerable small islands bind the ice, it is often possible to count upon a covering of ice as early as the beginning of October. Day by day this border of ice along the shore spreads over towards Victoria Land, the outer margin growing with every few days of calm weather. If the temperature is about 20 degrees below zero, one can drive over this new ice when it is only about two days old, even with heavy sledges. There is no snow on it at all, its only covering being a thin layer of rime; it is smooth and firm and not packed anywhere, and provides such easy going that, if one has willing dogs, what would otherwise be a long day's journey can be traversed in the course of a few hours. The only drawback is that great caution is necessary, and the uninitiated will often be unable to see the difference between the thick, safe ice and places where it is only a few hours old. This may be fatal, for it is always extremely dangerous to fall through thin ice where there is no snow. On breaking through the water washes over the unbroken edges and softens them, so that one continues to fall through; unless there is really old ice close by it is rarely possible

to clamber up again. It was thus a risky proceeding to drive our collections over such going, but on the other hand we had faith in our ability to distinguish between good and bad and so determined to take the chance. One thing we did not dare to do, and that was to overnight on this new ice, as with the slightest breeze it would break up, and either begin to pack under the very sledges or drift out to sea. So every afternoon we had to drive a considerable distance in towards the old ice and pick out a place to bivouac. And as a matter of fact this was necessary in order to renew our supplies of drinking water."

11: Stefansson--298 (1908-1912) 1913 Copper Eskimo
116, 132, 487

"From 'land sky' (1) ahead it seems that we are nearing Cape Baring--the land sky curves south a little west of us."

"1. When clouds of a uniform color hang low there is reflected in them a map of the earth below them. Snow-free land and open water are shown in black on the clouds; the pure white sea ice appears in white, and land covered with snow spiled by blown sand, etc., is reflected darker than the sea but lighter than snowless land. This sky map is of the greatest use to sledge travelers always, and especially in crossing wide bays from headland to headland; where the landmarks themselves are below the horizon their position is accurately indicated by their reflection in the clouds."

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In these decorated outer coats the white front stained rather easily, and the high waist was unsuitable for travelling in cold weather because it gave inadequate protection to the stomach. The latter defect could be partly remedied by slightly lengthening the front of the inner coat so that it would overlap the trousers by several inches. This the Eskimo often did. Even so, however, they generally reserved the short-waisted outer coat for evening wear, or for occasions when they wished to appear well dressed; and they wore for working and midwinter travelling an outer coat of heavy winter caribou fur that was nearly as long in front as behind, and that carried no decoration beyond an occasional white armband.[1] Many natives at the east end of Coronation Gulf, and one or two at the west end, affected a compromise garment; they wore both at home, and when travelling, a coat of moderately light fur that in pattern and decoration conformed to the style of the short-waisted coat, and could, therefore, take its place on ceremonial occasions, but which reached in front nearly to the knees, sometimes even below, and adequately protected the body in stormy weather[2]; on warm days it was often "pinned up" by hooking loops of sinew from the bottom edge to small toggles of wood attached around the waist. These same natives, however, nearly always possessed the heavier, undecorated coat so serviceable for midwinter sealing, and even at times the short-waisted coat. In such cases they occasionally dispensed with a hood on the latter garment, as it was no longer needed for outdoor wear.

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We encountered in Bathurst Inlet a native who had modelled his coat on the style current among the Back River and other Eskimo living inland on the Barren Grounds. The tail, instead of being narrow and rather oblong, was broad and rounded, and separated from the equally long and rounded front only by a deep slit up each side. Long strings of dehaired caribou skin hung in a close-set fringe from all the lower border.

Nearly all Eskimo men possessed still another outer coat, made not from caribou fur, but from the skin of the common foetid seal. It had the same shape as the heavy winter sealing and travelling coat, but was generally a little shorter, seldom reaching as far as the knees. It served primarily as a raincoat during the damp days of summer when caribou fur sheds its hair, but a few natives wore it also for sealing during the months of May and early June when the snow is wet and soggy. Naturally, it was never decorated; even its bottom edge was seldom trimmed evenly, but often retained the holes through which the green skins had been pegged out to dry (Figure 7).

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Inner and Outer Trousers. In winter, men wore two pairs of caribou-fur trousers (*qaqlik*), with the fur of the inner, as usual, against the body, and the fur of the outer turned outwards; in summer they laid aside the outer pair and wore only the inner, still with its fur inward. Both were approximately of the same length, barely overlapping the tops of the stockings; occasionally the inner pair was one-half inch to an inch longer (Figure 8). This inner pair was not decorated in any way, but often had a fringe of long-haired fur around the bottom, to protect the knees, as neither the inner nor the outer trousers carried drawstrings to bind them around the legs. The inner were often made from the heavy winter fur of the caribou, whereas for the outer, light summer skins were preferred, except for midwinter sealing. Most outer trousers were decorated on the legs; some carried bands of coloured skin at the bottom similar to those on stockings (Figure 9); others, a wide edging of white fur, and two or three narrower bands above; others again, combined these two types of decoration, or displayed more palpable geometrical designs in white bands. Most of the outer trousers had a drawstring around the waist that issued at the back through two

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[1] For a photograph of a native wearing such a garment *See* Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, vol. XII, pt. A, fig. 66, p. 166.

[2] For a photograph *See* Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, vol. XII, pt. B, Plate VII (lower right).

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 20]

29 together again. Heel crimping was naturally confined almost entirely to the more decorative shoes. When not crimped, this type usually had one seam up the middle of the heel, whereas the plainer type frequently had two and even three.

294 A casing of sealskin (more rarely, caribou skin), undressed, and sometimes 281 not even dehaired, was sewn round the top of the shoe to hold a cord of plaited 291 sinew (*singiq*) that emerged through two holes at the back and tied in a bow over the instep. Two large patches of sealskin, dehaired but undressed, covered the whole or almost the whole of the sole, giving it double thickness; and whenever a hole wore in either patch, another was promptly superimposed on it. These patches had to be sewn on with concealed stitches that caught only the under surface, because the thread would quickly fray and break if it penetrated [148] to the outside. Natives who anticipated considerable walking on glare ice or very hard, firmly packed snow sometimes added also narrow, meandering patches —"creepers"—to give them securer foothold (Figure 10c).

[114] In the autumn of 1915, when the party with which I was travelling was still hunting inland, an Eskimo induced his wife to make him a pair of caribou- [122] fur overshoes and to reinforce them with extra soles of sealskin. From another native I obtained a similar pair of caribou-fur overshoes that bore outer soles [177] of dehaired caribou skin, and, over the outer soles, patches of sealskin. These were probably copied from the shoes of the inland Eskimo to the southeast, where they were invariably made from caribou fur, as the Copper Eskimo well knew. Around Coronation Gulf they were regarded with disfavour for ordinary use, because, although warmer, they readily soaked up the damp from the half-thawing floor of the snow-hut and immediately shed their fur. They were more practicable among the inland Eskimo, whose snow-huts were not so warm, because, lacking seal oil, they burned caribou fat in their lamps, which served in the main for lighting only.

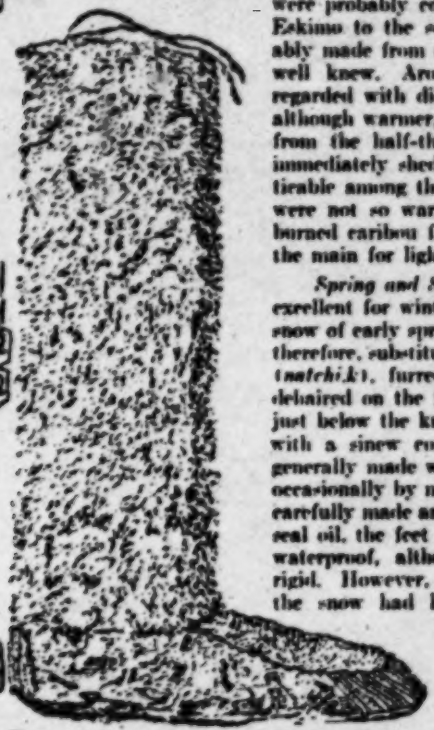

Figure 11. Man's spring boot. IV.D.1029. 1/4.

Spring and Summer Boots. Sealskin shoes were excellent for winter wear, but against the soft deep snow of early spring quite inadequate. The Eskimo, therefore, substituted for them long boots of sealskin (*natchik*), furred on the outside of the legs but dehaired on the feet (Figure 11). They reached to just below the knees, and were there tightly bound with a sinew cord that passed through a casing, generally made with an extra band of sealskin, but occasionally by merely sewing down the edge. When carefully made and saturated from time to time with seal oil, the feet of these boots were soft but quite waterproof, although the uppers were somewhat rigid. However, toward the end of spring, when the snow had largely melted, the streams were running, and pools of water lay everywhere, the Eskimo changed to their real waterboots (*iperautik*) (Figure 12), which were similar in shape, but dehaired throughout their entire

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Figure 19. Child's fawn-skin cap. IV.D.931. 1/4.

Caribou fur socks were worn in winter and summer alike, over the inner stocking. When the snow began to melt in the early spring, and both the outer stockings of caribou fur and the sealskin shoes gave place to sealskin boots, the Eskimo wore over these caribou fur socks other socks of sealskin (*pineqquk*), with the hair turned outside (Figure 17). Later in the season, again, when wandering inland over stony ground that was liable to blister the feet, they generally inserted socks of hairless sealskin (*kimitaituk*) between the other two (Figure 18). Both types of sealskin socks were made in exactly the same way as the caribou-fur ones.

Caps. Men very seldom wore caps, except the ceremonial caps for dances, but women used them occasionally, especially in summer when mosquitoes darkened the air, and children quite frequently at every season of the year. They were made generally from fawn or marmot fur, worn with the fur side outward; and in shape resembled a bonnet, often with lugs to protect the ears (Figure 19).

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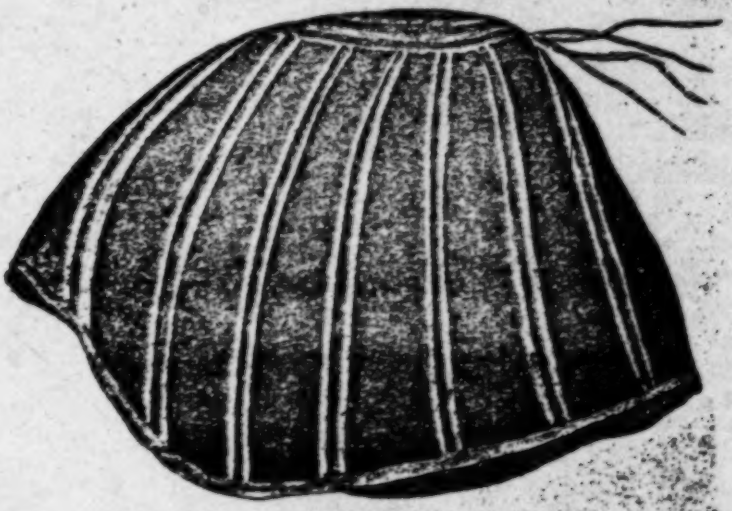

Figure 20. Dancing cap, of sealskin. IV.D.932. Approx. 1/2.

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Dancing caps were luxuries restricted to influential natives, who nevertheless lent them freely to kinsmen, so that in the course of an evening's entertainment the same cap might appear on half a dozen heads, both men's and women's.

Hough again, in his well-known memoir,[1] distinguishes three kinds of Eskimo lamps on the basis of their use, viz. the house lamp, the travelling or summer lamp, and the mortuary lamp, the latter frequently being models.

Figure 48. Bag for dry grass, made from the lining around an animal's heart. IV.D.238. 1/1.

Neither of these statements is quite correct when applied to the Copper Eskimo. They had lamps of every size, from 2 or 3 inches long up to 50 inches; and small vessels 8 or 12 inches long were as common as lamps of 30 inches. From June to September or October, when most of the snow had melted from the land and the families were scattered in search of fish and caribou, the natives generally cached their lamps with the sleds on the seashore or on the margins of lakes, and used for fuel dwarf willow, heather, *Dryas integrifolia*, and other plants, instead of blubber. Consequently, they had no special summer lamp. But because their ordinary lamp seldom functioned during the summer months we cannot say with Porsild that it had lost its importance as a heater. It still remained the indispensable prerequisite of existence during two-thirds of the year for heat as well as for light.

[1] Hough, Walter: Ann. Rept. Smith. Inst., U.S. Nat. Mus., 1898, p. 1005.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
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men, I improvised extra meals of powerful doughnuts to dull the edges of their appetites. Chipman, O'Neill, the geologist, and Johansen, the biologist, always provided good fare, although Johansen's enthusiasm for pure science often restricted us to two meals a day. But it was for Cox, the junior topographer, that we reserved our greatest respect. He startled us one day by placing on the table a splendid cake covered with rich chocolate icing. Our eyes gleamed with anticipation; it was the first real cake we had seen for many months, and each man grabbed simultaneously for the dish. O'Neill won; two quick cuts of the knife landed a huge slice in front of him. Then a roar of laughter shook the room, for the body of the cake was solid cold cornmeal mush left over from our breakfast.

Our first task after the *Alaska* left was to erect a house for the approaching winter. September with its shortening days had come upon us, and snow might fall at any time, snow that would not disappear before the following June. Building in the Arctic is by no means as difficult as in the Antarctic. There is little or no vegetation in the latter region, and in consequence no soil, so that a winter house offers no comfort unless it has double or triple walls of close-fitting boards lined with tar paper, felt, or other non-conducting material. But the tundrous soil of the Arctic provides the finest kind of sheathing for a house. All that is needed is a wooden framework strong enough to

114 123 [264] [431] [513]
ings for us, stand shyly inside the doorway, kicking their feet together restlessly as though knocking off the snow. Every one is tired after the day's journey, and as soon as the meal is ended strips off his clothes, tucks them under his head for a pillow, and glides into a sleeping-bag of caribou fur. Mrs. Light is the last to retire, for she still has some small duties to perform. She calls in the dogs from the passageway, one by one, throws them a few strips of blubber, and drives them out with the snow-duster, a short stick for beating the snow from our garments. Then she adjusts the lamp for the night, turns our boots and mittens so that they will dry on both sides, fits the snow-block into the doorway to keep out the cold air and the dogs, and slips quickly into her husband's "double" bag of caribou fur. Most of the inmates sleep with their mouths open, and their loud snores reverberating inside the hut drown the less resonant notes of the dogs in the passage.

[231] [412] [513] [593] [354] 513

Leaving Putulik, I rejoined my late acquaintances on Victoria Island. The sun no longer climbed above the horizon, and the "day" was limited to the twilight hours from 9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.; but a bright moon lit up the trail for me during the last three hours of the journey. The tribe was still living in the same settlement, for the women had not completed all the new fur clothes their families required during the winter months, and it would violate one of their most rigid taboos to finish the sewing on the sea-ice,

114 [132] 361 291 784

abandoned their huts. Those who had windows of ice in their houses removed them and passed their goods through the gap; and those who had no windows cut large holes in the walls, which they could fill up with a snow-block or two if they wanted to reoccupy the huts. But the Eskimos seldom returned to the same habitations; old houses remained deserted until the spring, when they melted slowly away under the warm rays of the sun. Passing travellers might occupy them for a night, but even they generally preferred to build new houses, which were warmer and more comfortable. Hence one could readily discover all the winter movements of these Eskimos by tracking down the villages they had successively deserted between October and May.

Our migration along the coast resulted in a new settlement of snow-huts a few yards out from the beach. It was too early in the winter to camp far from shore, for a violent gale might break the level ice-field into drifting floes. Even the light gale that sprang up four nights later produced a large tide-crack under two houses that lay more to seaward than the rest. Misfortune ruled that I should be sleeping in one of them. The snow-blocks cracked one after another, with loud reports like pistol-shots, and the walls split from ceiling to floor. Then the water poured up through the tide-crack and flooded the hut nearly to the level of the sleeping-platform. My hostess, stepping down to

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relight the lamp, sank up to her knees in the icy slush; her terrified shriek made us leap from our beds in alarm. Fortunately the water rose no higher during the night, or we might have had difficulty in escaping to the land. As it was we were able to wait until daylight, when we cut a hole through the back wall and transported our belongings to a safer home beyond the reach of the tide.

I marvelled at the time that the roof of the dwelling did not cave in upon our heads. But a snow-hut is remarkably solid once the warmth inside has converted its walls to ice. Soon after this gale I visited the hut in which I was nearly asphyxiated a few weeks before, and the native who accompanied me stood on its highest block without disaster. He mounted cautiously, it is true, for even ice must be fairly thick to withstand a pressure of 150 pounds; and the walls of this hut were still mainly snow, for we had occupied it only one night. But it was a striking test of the solidity of a snow-house, and explained why the entire half of a dwelling may be cut away without disturbing the other half.

There were so many things of interest in our new settlement, so much that was novel and strange to record in my note-books each evening, that the days passed almost unnoticed. The Eskimos themselves knew nothing of days or weeks; they kept no reckoning even of the months, only of the changing seasons as they affected the food supply.

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names, Liver and Icehouse. Both seemed rather misleading; she was really neither choleric nor frigid, but a jolly, high-spirited old lady with the warmest heart imaginable, and a tongue more prone to gossip than was strictly advisable. She received us with open arms, and resigned to us half the platform in her hut, where we slept and stored all our possessions. Since her platform looked directly into the dance-house, the centre of social life, we saw everything that happened in the community, or heard it reported to our neighbours.

January was generally the coldest, darkest, and stormiest month in the year, the only month that the Eskimos really dreaded. Blizzards often confined them to their houses five days out of seven, and even if a hunter braved the storms he could find no seal-holes through the driving snow. Hunger then reigned in every hut, and the inmates shivered with cold as they extinguished their lamps one by one to conserve the oil. But the winter of 1914-15 was unusually mild. Blizzards were rare even in January, and they were separated by periods of calm weather when the hunters captured five and six seals daily. So the lamps burned brightly in all the houses and the natives were light-hearted and happy. They gaily assembled in the dance-house each evening to while away the hours with song and dance; and their medicine-men often gave weird performances, not to relieve distress, but simply to maintain their prestige and entertain their audiences.

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botanists were never quite satisfied with his explanation. Johansen now offered a different one. By cutting into the trees he had discovered many dead beetles and their larvæ, even a larva still living. Three or four genera were represented, all known to be a menace to our northern forests, since they sap the strength of the larger branches. The beetles had themselves been killed by abnormally cold weather; but it seemed certain that they, and not fires, were responsible for the destruction of the timber and the recession of the tree-line. Johansen had good reason to be elated at his discovery.

We stayed two days longer in the grove to enable him to continue his researches. Palaiyak went caribou-hunting, for three men and twelve dogs will consume a whole carcass in one day. I spent most of the time cooking the meals, attending to the dogs, and performing the other routine duties incident to camp life. The temperature had fallen as soon as we left the coast, and our mercury thermometer froze at —51° F.; but the atmosphere was calm and dry, and the cold caused us little inconvenience. A brilliant display of parhelia illumined the dark spruce trees that rose straight out of the white snow, and the landscape was surprisingly beautiful after the barren monotony of the sea-coast.

The second afternoon I wandered down to the river to watch the clouds of vapour steaming up from the

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inland would snap the lashings of their bows. This was not true, for other Eskimos who possessed no weapons except bows and arrows before the introduction of rifles hunted in the interior all through the winter. But these inland Eskimos used caribou fat in their stone lamps, and caribou fat is a miserable substitute for seal-blubber, which gives a far purer and hotter flame. There lay the real explanation. The Coppermine Eskimos could have hunted the caribou if they wished, but they preferred the sea-ice and its more comfortable homes lit up by the burning blubber.

The temperature was only —30° F., 20° higher than inland, when we reached the mouth of the Coppermine; yet the cold seemed more biting, for the air was damp, the atmosphere foggy, and a slight northeast wind blew directly in our faces. We struck out northward over the ice, and on the second day sighted three Eskimos standing over their seal-holes. They viewed with alarm the strange sled and toboggan, so different from any of their own; but our peace-signal banished their fears, and they joyfully guided us to their village a few miles farther on. The whole population turned out to welcome us and to assist in setting up our tent, which they seemed to understand almost as well as ourselves. They understood, also, our stove for burning wood, for they informed us that there was no driftwood within five miles of their settlement and offered to lend us two stone lamps and a little blubber.

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speak the white man's language and perform his intricate dances.

The performance ended at last, and the people began to disperse to their huts. Cockney, who was among the first to vanish, hastened to the station to describe my abnormal behaviour and organize a strong party that would bring me safely home. But before he had finished his narrative I myself arrived on the scene and offered a more reasonable explanation of my conduct.

The natives living out in the strait became very friendly again when the charge of murder was lifted from my head. I visited their settlement twice for periods of three or four days, staying each time with my old acquaintance, Ikpuck. The sun was now much higher in the sky, and a mildness in the atmosphere indicated the approach of spring. Snow-huts would soon be untenable; the slight melting of their ceilings around noon had already caused some of the people to move into large tents made of caribou skins. With the advent of longer days the hunters captured more seals, and the women were packing the surplus blubber into large bags to cache on the coast until autumn. Everything seemed to be changing. The various bands that had united in midwinter were separating out again and moving to different sealing-grounds; and every fortnight, as the new sealing-grounds became exhausted, they moved their settlements forward a few more miles.

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ing my brief absence. It was now mid-April, and the natives were travelling in easy stages toward the land, allowing a few days between each migration for the women and children to freight forward the pokes of blubber and the men to resume their sealing. All the families had adopted skin tents in place of snow-houses, or, if their tents were still cached on the coast, they roofed circular walls of snow with the skins of caribou and musk-oxen. The camp was mottled with clothing, suspended from sticks, to dry in the warm sun; and at every little snow-flurry the women rushed from the tents to beat the light flakes from each garment before they melted and spoiled the fur. Night and day had merged into one another, the sun disappearing for one hour only at midnight; and the temperature remained fairly constant around 15°F., except at noon, when it mounted at times to the freezing-point.

The younger women, who were as well versed as the men in the peculiar habits of the seal, often went out with the hunters to escape the monotonous care of clothes and blubber. Each seal appeared to have its special territory, like a bird in the nesting season; and every half-hour or so it came to the surface to breathe. In summer, with open water all around, it rose at any place; but when the sea froze in the autumn it could reach the atmosphere only by breaking through the thin sheet of ice that covered its domain. The breathing-holes made at that season remained open

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kinsman Ikpuck. For the rest, he was an energetic hunter, a good sealer, and a very skilful fisherman, qualities that rank high in an Eskimo community. His marriage yielded him no children, but his wife, whose first husband had died a few years earlier, brought a fourteen-year-old son in her train.

Even the children had many little duties to perform in this our last camp on the sea-ice, while the fathers hunted seals and caribou, and the mothers sorted out the household things they intended to leave on the coast, or filled the pokes of blubber they were storing away for the autumn months. Each family had two pokes that weighed, when full, between three hundred and four hundred pounds, and our most pressing task for the moment was to dispose of them. Most people would have found it very unpleasant to cram a bag with oily seal blubber; but the women, accustomed to the task from childhood, merely put on their oldest clothes, rolled up the coat-sleeves, and buried their arms in the greasy mass without the slightest hesitation.

Not all the oil that exuded from the blubber found its way into the pokes. The women rubbed some of it over their faces to mitigate the effect of sunburn, and recommended the same treatment for my own weather-beaten countenance. Sunburn hardly seemed credible when the temperature of the atmosphere remained constantly below the freezing-point; but the sun now shone throughout the twenty-four hours of

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752
• 182 the day, and its light was doubled by reflection from the snow. So man, like the animals, changed his colour
142 with the season. The faces of the Eskimos during the dark days of winter had been as fair as an Englishman's; now they were tanned to the deep rich brown of a southern European. One or two appeared to be darker still, but I strongly suspected that they could be appreciably lightened by a liberal application of soap and water.

372 Ikpuck and I conveyed his blubber pokes to a small
417 island three miles off the coast, where we covered them with boulders to protect them from sea-gulls and foxes. The sea-gulls were easily deterred, but only a well-built cache could keep out the foxes, which worm their way into the smallest crevices. Before open water cut off communication with the shore, however, all animals would leave the island, and nothing could disturb our pokes throughout the summer.

225 Continual sealing began to pall on the Eskimos when the safe disposition of their blubber removed the last
132 excuse for lingering on the sea-ice. The long winter had come to an end, and the midnight sun was shining over their heads. They forgot the monotonous hours of confinement within the dimly lighted huts, when the blizzards raged outdoors and the twilight of noon resembled night rather than day. The earth was
136 awakening to life again after its long sleep. Ducks
137 and loons flew overhead, the ptarmigan in the valleys

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were seeking out their mates, and a faint tinge of green had crept into the brown tips of the low dwarf willows that protruded above the snow. In the hills lay countless lakes teeming with trout and salmon, and herds of caribou grazed on the slopes and plains. Soon large pools would form around the margins of the lakes, and the unlocked waters race in foaming torrents to the sea. Everything beckoned us landward, to a joyous life in the open air. There would still be a few more snow-storms, succeeded by fogs and rain; later, dark clouds of mosquitoes would assail us night and day without rest. But there would be many days, too, of mild, clear weather when we could sleep beneath the open sky; and food was abundant everywhere, so that we could roam where we pleased, as free and unfettered as the caribou we hunted.

On May 9 our sleds climbed up the shore near the mouth of a large creek named Okowyarvik. The new life had begun.

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usual starting-point for Eskimos travelling to the Great Sound, since the hills immediately north were lower than at any other place either to east or west. Okowyarvik means "the Home of the Dryad," not the wood-nymph of that name, who could never find a home in this desolate land, but the *Dryas integrifolia*, a tiny flowering plant distantly related to our rose. The Eskimos generally paid little attention to the plants around them because they added nothing to their food supply; but the dryad, heather, and willow furnished their fuel during the summer months, and in the hills heather and willow were not procurable.

We lingered a week at "Dryad Harbour," for the season was still early and the snow that covered the land would last another month. While the men were hunting caribou the women overhauled their bags of clothing, putting aside all the heavier garments not needed again till winter. To these they added the furniture of the snow-huts, the long wooden tables, the drying frames, and a few of the stone lamps. Each family made a separate pile of its possessions, and on top of each pile the men deposited their sealing weapons, useless for the life on land. I myself cached nearly all my provisions—pemmican, rice, oatmeal, hard bread, and tea sufficient to last me about a month; only a little tea and cornmeal I retained on my sled, to ease the transition from the "balanced" diet of

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fish here," he called. "I will finish the hole for you." 226
We changed places, and I dropped my line into the 123
water. Presently I hooked a fish, which I hauled up eagerly, hand over hand, as I had often done in boyhood; but it slipped off during a momentary pause in the strain, for the hook was barbless. Afterward Ikpuck taught me his own method of pulling in the line, and the reason for the barbless hook. He used, not his hands, but his wrists, rotating them alternately against the cord so that the strain remained constant. A barb was not only unnecessary, but a disadvantage, because, in jigging, a fish is caught in the lip where the flesh is tender, and a barbed hook often tears loose where a barbless hook holds firm.

For an hour we had no more bites, so we crossed some ridges and dug new holes in another lake, two miles away. Here the light breeze of the morning sud- [132]
denly increased to a violent gale. Ikpuck, considering it part of the day's routine, sat on a snow-block with his back to the driving snow and jigged his line as patiently as in calm summer weather. I perforce did likewise, though my feet seemed to grow colder and more solid than the ice beneath. We returned to camp at last with five trout and two salmon, one from my hook, all the rest from Ikpuck's. But the lesson he gave me bore fruit, for within a month I could dig my own holes and catch as many fish as my companions.

Two short moves from this lake brought us to the 133
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Lake of Dancing, where we hoped to meet the Tormiat natives from the Great Sound. It was famous not on account of its size—it was even smaller than the lake we had just left—nor for its abundance of fish; but because it lay near the watershed on the highway to the Great Sound, and was encircled by many larger lakes that provided good fishing until midsummer. We set up our tents on one of several old camp-sites around its margin, and settled down to await the Tormiat.

During the next six days we scoured all the hills around us, discovering a few caribou, but no natives save two families that had separated from us on the ice a month before. On every excursion we were joined by Leaf, The Runner's wife, who had borrowed her husband's .22 rifle to shoot at ptarmigan. I lent her my own rifle on one occasion when we were stalking a herd of caribou, and she killed a magnificent bull, the finest we saw on Victoria Island. The other women devoted all their time to fishing, and to drying and caching the meat and fish that began to accumulate in camp.

Spring was now advancing rapidly; so much snow had melted from the hill-sides that sledding would soon be impossible. At times the temperature rose above 40° F., though it dropped below the freezing-point again at evening. Ptarmigan were mating in every hollow, and the children launched many an arrow at them with little success.

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132
342 The Tormiat from the Great Sound did not arrive on the morrow. Instead, from their country came a blustering snow-storm that swirled and eddied around our camp for thirty-six hours. The wretched wind-breaks behind which the Eskimos crouched for shelter blew down in five minutes. My tent alone stood firm. It was 6¼ feet long, 5 feet wide, and 4 feet high, admirably adapted for one man, but a trifle small when Ikpuck and Icehouse shared it with me, as they did from now until autumn. Small or not, it was the only shelter that presented itself. While the men were building low walls of snow-blocks, and roofing them with sticks and skins into the semblance of dwellings, the women and children huddled inside my tent, one on top of another, and on top of Ikpuck and me, until the blizzard outside would have seemed a zephyr had we been able to reach it. But the door was blocked by a solid wall of humanity encased in fur, and the back of the tent was sewn to the floor-strips. Like bees in the centre of a hanging swarm, we almost suffocated; but we were warm.

231 The dogs howled all through the night, a big, grey-haired scoundrel being the worst offender. Icehouse, who had named it after her grandfather, yelled to it unceasingly, "Lie down there, my grandfather. You have done no work today. You have been well fed. Have you no bottom to your stomach?" The Eskimos in the neighbouring tents shouted every time they heard

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CHAPTER VIII

BREAD FROM THE WATERS

OUR meeting with the Tormiat from the Great Sound fulfilled one of the purposes for which I had shaken off civilization and adopted the Eskimo life. It is true that we encountered but two families, and those for four days only; but in customs and language they so closely resembled the natives with whom I was travelling that it was unnecessary to visit the remainder of the tribe. My companions had welcomed the journey as a pleasant break in the routine of their daily life. Now that it was ended they resumed their regular duty at this season, the drying and storing away of fish for the barren months of early winter.

The long Arctic spring was drawing to its close.

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• 132 Some of the smaller ponds had lost their covering of ice, and narrow lanes of water separated the still
136 frozen lakes from their shore-lines. Ducks and loons, returning to their breeding-grounds, sought out old nesting-places in the mossy tundra or on grassy islets in the lagoons. The plumage of the ptarmigan was changing; their breasts preserved a wintry whiteness, but their backs became a faded brown hardly distinguishable from the vegetation around them. The females changed more rapidly than the males, as though nature had designed for them special protection; when they settled on snow their brown backs resembled the moss-covered boulders protruding above the surface, and in the meadows the white of their breasts shone like patches of unmelted snow. Life in many forms surrounded us, but caribou were lacking, for the countless herds that had migrated to Victoria Island from the south were swallowed up in the land. A month before, we had sighted five and six herds daily; now we saw fresh tracks, but rarely a single animal. The cows had dropped their calves in lonely valleys, and were lingering near them until they were strong enough to join the herds; and the bulls were wandering singly, or in twos and threes, here today and gone tomorrow, searching for the richest pastures.

512 From our camp on the Lake of Dancing we visited
000 all the lakes within a radius of six miles. Our party

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223 291 place. Despite Icehouse's loud remonstrances, despite the laughter of the rest of us, he raced for the pool again, the long tail alternately flapping between his naked legs and streaming in the air behind him. And again the ice gave way beneath him! Chilled to the bone, and thoroughly crestfallen, he hastened to the shore, and in a surly voice bade Icehouse unfasten the packs and set up the tent.

221 361 226 Our jigging in this corner of Lake Ever-Frozen was very productive for a week, and the new camp with its lines of drying fish among the dogs and tents soon became a replica of the one we had just abandoned. To stand on the ice hour after hour and mechanically vibrate a long line in the clear water below was a pleasantly monotonous occupation when the air was mild and the sunlight sparkled in the crystalline snow. [132] Even when fogs rolled down on us, and only the dark water-holes at our feet relieved the whiteness all around, there was a comfortable peace in the atmosphere and in the mellowed voices that penetrated from 224 somewhere unseen. The life was in fact too tranquil, too monotonous, for The Runner and his wife. They craved more activity, and spoke of hunting for caribou [123] to the northward; and when they broached their project to me I rashly promised to accompany them.

We set out on a clear, bright morning and travelled from one ridge to another, pausing on each crest to search the surrounding country. No caribou were

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visible, but two hares started up beneath our feet and fled to the extreme edge of the snow-patch. They seemed to know that their coats had not yet changed to a summer brown, for they crouched there, half invisible, until we almost walked on top of them; then, flashing white on the dull clay, they sped across to the next snow-patch and again crouched motionless. But a hunter who lives by the chase feels no pity for his victims, and both animals, despite their pathetic ruses, soon dangled over The Runner's shoulder.

The sky clouded in the afternoon, and a fierce snow-storm broke in our faces, blotting everything from view. It was useless to keep on travelling, for a caribou might pass unseen within ten yards of us; it was equally useless to turn back and wander for hours vainly seeking the camp. We looked around for shelter. There was none; no cliff, not even a boulder. The Runner and I sat on the snow, shoulder to shoulder, backs to the wind; while Leaf, his wife, crouched in the angle between our outstretched legs. After a long half-hour the storm began to pass over. When I mentioned the change to my companions Leaf raised her head and smiled. The Runner did not hear; with folded arms and head drooping on his chest he was sleeping.

We circled back toward the tents after the gale abated, and in spite of the light fog that still hung over the landscape stumbled on two young bulls, both

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136 the mortality of the eiders, nature keeps the numbers in both species within definite limits.

223 The bows and arrows of the Eskimos inflicted but little damage on these water-fowl. I once came upon Parted-Hair after he had vainly discharged all his arrows at a loon that was swimming in the corner of a lake. Using an ice-cake for a raft, and his fish-spear as a pole, he was gathering up the feathered shafts, one by one, as they danced upright in the water, while his step-son and Jennie tried to prevent the bird's flight by racing along the ice-edge and shouting whenever it raised its head above the surface. The chances were all in favour of the loon when I ended the chase with a bullet.

136 The days grew warmer and more pleasant as spring [132] gave place to summer. Yet its coming was not an unmixed blessing, for it hatched out myriads of mosquitoes that rose and fell in the atmosphere like the motes in a sunbeam. How so many could exist was a mystery. Wherever we travelled they hovered around us like bees swarming, and no smudge could keep them at bay. My tent became the common refuge, for its doorway of fine netting resisted all their assaults, though they pattered on the roof like rain. Outside every one wore mittens as in winter, and my companions beat their faces with loon skins as automatically as a band-conductor wields his baton. Only on the ice could we escape the insects, their flight being

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into a paste with cold water it was more digestible than the half-raw fish on the drying-poles, and more palatable than saltless fish boiled over a smoky flame in a cupful of water. So for a week I ate nothing but pemmican. Gradually the dysentery lessened, my strength began to return, and, though the intolerable thirst continued, there was hope of a permanent recovery if in some way we could improve our diet.

I talked the matter over with Ikpuck. He could understand my dislike of raw fish, but not its effect on my health, unless, indeed, my guardian spirit had forbidden its consumption. Yet he would gladly do anything to aid my recovery. It was the end of July; the fur of the caribou was in its prime, and the fishing season nearing its close. He had intended to pass the remainder of the summer wandering in the hills to the north-east, where caribou were numerous but fuel scarce; however, seeing that I might eat nothing but cooked food, we could move southward toward the coast if I wished, and travel over plains amply clothed with heather and willow. We agreed to adopt this second plan and communicated the decision to our companions.

A snow-storm, not an unusual occurrence even in the height of summer, delayed our departure a few days; but as soon as the snow melted again we packed all our fish to the Lake of Dancing and cached it with our other possessions. Then we turned southward, away

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ring its passage to the sea. To the north lay a broad, sandy plain, the bed of an ancient lake, and beyond, an isolated, rounded hill flanked by soft meadows that were certain to harbour caribou. We all forded the stream without mishap except Jennie, who had dropped behind when readjusting the packs of two dogs. I went back to look for her, while the others pushed on across the plain. The poor child was nearly a mile in the rear, still struggling cheerfully with the ill-balanced packs that persisted in slipping under the animals' bellies. I rearranged them for her, and we hurried on to overtake our companions; but a fierce sand-storm now swept the plain, and our progress was slow and painful, with frequent returnings to urge on the dogs. Dogs and storm combined delayed us so greatly that the hunters, tired of waiting for us at the hill, went on ahead to intercept a herd of caribou they had sighted, leaving little Knife-Blade to watch for me and request me to join them with all speed.

This hunt well illustrated the unity of an Eskimo band. Every individual, man, woman, and child, took part in it—except The Listener's wife, who, being old and feeble, remained to guard the packs; and both men and women contributed to the discussion that decided the tactics to be employed. At the foot of the hill stretched a lake three-quarters of a mile in diameter, and, beyond it, a wide, grassy plain where fifteen caribou were grazing. The plain rose in a gentle incline

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of sealskin, over which was lashed a pair of stout cords of twisted sinew. It was the sinew that gave the weapon its spring, for the frame was merely drift-wood picked up on the beach, or spruce of the poorest quality. Such crude materials, added to crude workmanship, made the balance very uneven, so that although the maximum range of the weapon was about one hundred and twenty-five yards, its effective range hardly exceeded twenty-five. Indeed, I have seen The Listener miss a caribou that passed not more than fifteen yards away.

While the adults amused themselves at archery beside the camp the children played their own games on the slope above. They set up fences of turf to enclose fictitious caribou, and dug shallow pits from which to shoot their arrows; or they marked out a line of snow-huts with pebbles, and filled the dance-house with imaginary singers. Thus the occupations of the parents were the pastimes of the children, who learned in play their duties of after years.

Twenty-five miles west of the sand-plain, at Bad Creek, we left The Listener's wife to dry our stock of meat, promising to rejoin her before many days; with lightened packs we then pushed on toward Mt. Arrow-smith, camping near a crag of diabase twelve feet high that formed a landmark visible for many miles. Here we encountered a violent snow-storm that continued unabated for two days. We spent the first in our sleep-

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ing-bags, singing in chorus between intervals of sleep, or mocking each other's voices. Our gaiety infected even the dignified Ikpuck, who improvised a comic song about my adventure with the wolf on the Coppermine River. No hardship could quench the cheerfulness of my companions. When morning dawned, and, breakfastless, we struggled ahead in the teeth of the gale, they launched many a jest at Icehouse, who, ill-prepared for such inclement weather, had enveloped her portly figure in a sleeping-robe, and waddled along with the rolling gait of a bear.

The snow melted slowly, for the brief summer was drawing to its close. The last of the flowers lay withered, butterflies and moths had vanished, and even the mosquitoes had ceased their endless buzzing. The days were shortening rapidly; darkness covered the land for three hours around midnight, and on still evenings ice was forming on the ponds and lakes. It was time to retrace our steps to our caches, take down the sleds, and seek out warmer clothing. But, before turning back, we could make one brief dash to the northward and try our fortunes in the hills behind Cape Baring.

Two days later, in the unmelted snow on the slope of a ridge, we came upon the fresh tracks of two polar bears. Here was game worth the hunting. We dropped our packs on the ridge-top in charge of Ice-

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a needle-case, and one or two smaller articles mingled with the broken poles of a tent. Although no bones were visible, we knew that some one had died here, that her spirit had gone to its "hunting-ground" with the spirits of the things she had used in life. I picked up the broken tent-poles to carry along for fuel, but laid them down again when my companions reproached me for stealing her shelter. Had I but known, I might have replaced them with miniature poles, for the dead use not the material things, but their spirits, or what we in our philosophical jargon call concepts. So, at least, Icehouse explained to me a fortnight later when, discovering another grave, she substituted a toy lamp for a real one; the deceased woman suffered no loss, and Icehouse gained a vessel of which she stood greatly in need.

It was only the second week in September, but snow that fell incessantly for three days did not melt again, and every lake was solidly bound with ice. Of birds we saw only a few ptarmigan that were already turning white, and two tiny snow-buntings which of all the migratory birds are the first to come and the last to leave. Ducks and geese, sandpipers, plovers and longspurs, all had winged their way to countries that have no winter. Many even of the ptarmigan were moving southward, and the caribou would follow them, my companions said, within the next three or four weeks. Some of the caribou herds would probably

matter. He pretended to be sound asleep when she stole in, and the camp relapsed into silence, except that now and then a low sob issued from the tent of The Chatterbox, who had disciplined his wife by tearing her coat from top to bottom. Icehouse was unusually quiet in the morning, and our visitors departed abruptly for the hills. So once more our tent stood solitary.

In order to protect ourselves more effectively from the weather we moved into the sealskin cooking-tent, built a low rampart of turf around its base, and covered the roof with caribou hides. The small lamp that Icehouse had discovered on a grave kept our new quarters comparatively snug, and its pale, warm glow streaming through the half-open door guided us home in the darkness from our weary hunts. The weather was stormier now, the nights much longer; in a few more weeks the sun would set for its midwinter sleep. This shortness of the daylight restricted our excursions, so that we added no more than two caribou to the total we had laid aside in our caches. Sometimes we did not go hunting at all, but kept watch in turn from the look-out post and scraped caribou hides inside the tent. Icehouse made herself a pair of trousers from a skin that I scraped, and, rising at 2 A.M. a morning or two afterward, made a similar garment for me by the light of her blubber-lamp. So the days passed monotonously. At last Ikpuck decided that it

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products, recommended its adoption in low temperatures as a pocket-handkerchief. 000

Between the hills and the coast we ran into another wave of migrating caribou, the loiterers who had stayed behind in their summer pasture-grounds until the call of winter became too imperious to disobey. The strait had now frozen, but the ice was weak and dangerous, and the sky showed dark reflections from lanes of open water. No Eskimo was so foolhardy as to venture out more than three or four miles, lest a sudden gale should break the unstable field into a maze of drifting floes; yet there were tracks of caribou on the ice, all pointing south toward the mainland and none returning. My "father" told me that the old bull at the head of each herd steered a zigzag course along the edge of the thicker ice, which he tested at intervals with his forefeet. Evidently these northern caribou possess a special "ice instinct" over and above the instinct of migration; and since experience can create an instinct only when repeated through countless generations, here was definite evidence that for centuries, and even millennia, the caribou have wandered north each spring to pass the summer in the Arctic archipelagoes, and wandered south again to winter on the mainland as soon as the sea froze over in the autumn. Trespassing on unsafe ice doubtless caused many casualties during the earlier centuries of their migrations; but today the instinct seems infallible, 136 [132].

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lifted the veil of secrecy a few inches the other raised it higher, lest silence should rob him of a share in the reward. In the end it was not their secretiveness that hampered our researches, but our ignorance of their ways of thought and their own inability to narrate a story from the ground upward; for they invariably began with the crisis, so to speak, and worked backward and forward, with many omissions and repetitions, on the tacit assumption that our minds moved in the same groove as theirs and that explanations were needless.

If the preceding winter had been unusually mild, this one was unusually stormy. Gales from east and west—the two prevailing quarters—swept the shelterless ice-field day after day until its covering of snow grew hard like a macadamized road. Then the wind blew narrow furrows along it, *sulci* with crests so sharp that they hurt the feet. Hunters who ventured out to seal could find no breathing-holes amid the driving snow, and with difficulty reached their homes again. The first gales passed unheeded. The people had fish and caribou meat stored outside their huts, and pokes of blubber for their lamps. Gathered inside the dance-house, they could laugh at the howling blizzards and while away the hours in song and gymnastics. But when their food was exhausted, when half their lamps had expired from want of oil, dance-songs

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official welcome, and danced in front of him, interspersing their songs with impromptu speeches to express their delight at his visit. The Runner, who had the prerogative of dancing next, made a suitable reply, saying how glad he had been to accompany his "white brother" on this journey and to meet once more his old acquaintances of the Musk-ox land. The whole ceremony resembled the joyous reunion of long-separated friends. As he remarked to me afterward, when the gathering dispersed, "It is good to establish dancing-companions in every tribe, for then you are sure of a welcome wherever you travel."

The cheerfulness of the villagers amid their hardships aroused our admiration. On Victoria Island the Eskimos with whom I had wandered frequently fasted for twenty-four and even forty-eight hours. The experience was no novelty in their lives; they merely tightened their belts, trudged steadily forward a dozen or fifteen miles, and said smilingly, "If we sight no caribou today we will tomorrow; or, if not tomorrow, certainly the day after." It was summer then, and our tents were comfortable even without fires. But in this village the winter gales were raging, the temperature fluctuating between 25 and 45 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, and ill-luck had been trailing the natives for several weeks. The hunters had searched for seals in the fiercest blizzards until every man's face was scarred with frost-bites, but the number

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they had captured hardly sufficed to keep them alive. Now their strength was impaired by starvation, their huts cold from lack of oil in the lamps. One or two families, driven by hunger, had even eaten the dry sealskin cases of their bows. Perhaps it was the nearness of spring that buoyed up their courage, for none of them showed despondency or gloom, despite their pinched faces and empty cooking-pots. Indeed, they seemed more distressed by their apparent inhospitality, for several of our visitors apologized at being unable to offer us the usual presents of meat.

We stayed with them three days, and each morning the men left early for their hunting-grounds, although, half blinded by the snow-clouds, they could find few seal-holes and captured not a single seal. Our own supplies were running dangerously low; we had full rations for three days only, and the return journey to Bernard Harbour required at least a week. So we reloaded our sled and struck southward to the mainland, hoping to find game of some description as we skirted the coast.

Our departure marked the beginning of even worse weather, for the temperature dropped lower still, and the wind, which had blown in our faces throughout the eastward march, now swung round to smite us from the west. That first day's journey to the mainland tried us all severely, and though I perhaps suffered most—my health being far from good at this period—

THROUGH BLIZZARDS TO SPRING

Spring came suddenly about the middle of March, when the thermometer rose well above zero. Our station then became the Mecca for tribes from as far east as the Musk-ox people, who, like the nearer Eskimos, clamoured for trade goods, rifles, and ammunition. These were not the people I had visited three or four weeks previously, but kinsmen from the second camp a few miles farther east, who had lingered at their new sealing-ground until milder weather enabled them to undertake the long journey to Bernard Harbour without hardship. Their leader was a short, white-bearded medicine-man, brusque but always dignified in his movements, and with a shrewd, kindly face that attracted immediate attention. Undoubtedly he possessed great force of character, for his tribesmen reverenced him as a father and complied with all his wishes; nominally the Eskimos recognize no chiefs among themselves, considering every man the equal of every other.

The old man taught me some of his ancient lore, and even summoned a familiar spirit that I might record a shamanistic séance on the phonograph. His followers credited him with the most fantastic powers; he could fly through the air like a bird, go down into the ocean like a fish, see what was happening hundreds of miles away. But the old man never boasted of these things; they might be true, he said, and they might not, for he lost all consciousness of himself when the familiar spirits took possession of his body.

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there were mitigating circumstances that pleaded in his favour. We were foreigners in their land, beings partly of another world, who were blessed with many wonderful things that the Eskimos lacked. Though kindly enough after our own peculiar fashion, we neither observed their customs concerning the sharing of food with neighbours, nor assumed the other obligations of their semi-communistic life. If we thus claimed exemption from the only social code they knew, could we fairly expect them to observe their moral code toward us, and regard our property as inviolate? It speaks highly of their character that nearly all of them did observe it, and not only dealt with us honestly, but reproved those of their countrymen who deviated from the accepted path. We had come to this camp prepared for serious trouble, but the goodwill of its inhabitants, prudently directed by the old man, relieved the situation of all danger.

Spring was now fast advancing, the surface of the snow was beginning to thaw under the noon sun, and the night was almost as bright as the day. Girling considered that it was time for him to go back to his vessel a hundred and fifty miles to the west, that he might sail into Bernard Harbour and establish his mission there as soon as the ice broke up in the strait. I offered to escort him, since the interpreter and dog-team he had brought to our station during the winter had long since returned. The trip would be only a

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pleasure jaunt at this season, and I could search the coast-line for the ruins of ancient habitations.

The journey, outward and return, lasted three weeks, for we travelled leisurely, enjoying to the full the clear atmosphere and bright, warm sunshine that had succeeded the winter blizzards and cold. Patches of bare ground here and there relieved the monotony of the white snow, the chirping of spring birds filled the air, and numerous seals basked on the surface of the ice outside their breathing-holes. We saw several tent-rings near the shore, and an arrow and other objects lying beside two human skulls, grim relics of a forgotten tragedy. But what intrigued us most was the discovery of three stumps, rotted almost to ground level, that indicated quite clearly the site of an exceedingly ancient house.

All the Eskimo tribes in the western Arctic, where the coast-line is littered with large spruce and cottonwood trees brought down by the Mackenzie and Yukon Rivers, dwell in houses built of wood. But driftwood is so scarce in the Coronation Gulf area that the natives often made long journeys overland to distant forests in the interior in order to obtain even the small amount of timber required for sleds and narrow tables.

Their only fixed dwellings were the huts of snow with which we had become so familiar; houses built wholly or partly of wood were entirely outside their knowledge. Even their traditions failed to record such houses,